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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 000266

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TAGS: [SENV](#) [UNGA](#) [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [KUNR](#)
SUBJECT: INCOMING GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT SRGJAN KERIM
PREVIEWS AMBITIOUS AGENDA FOR 62ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

REF: USUN 246 (NOTAL)

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Classified By: Ambassador Richard T. Miller
Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Incoming President of the General Assembly (PGA), Srgjan Kerim of Macedonia, previewed his agenda for 62nd General Assembly in a meeting April 2 with Ambassador Miller at USUN. Kerim intends to take up residence in New York immediately after the May GA elections, and hopes to visit Washington in June. On climate change, Kerim is planning to hold a Thematic Debate in the fall and a follow-up panel meeting of some kind after the Bali UNFCC Meeting in December. He appears to understand the need to carefully manage this process and the need to be sure that hard science and economics take precedence over the near-hysteria attached to the subject these days in UN circles. Well-versed in economics, Kerim is highly interested in technology and innovation, and may be able to apply his activist instincts to other areas of UN reform, such as implementing the SYG's High Level Panel recommendations via a GA-led process. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Following up on strong US interest in his agenda plans deriving from their March 26 group lunch meeting (reftel), incoming PGA Kerim called on Ambassador Miller at USUN. Kerim was accompanied by Macedonia PR Dzundev and MFA Director Popovski, identified as his probable Chief of Staff. Kerim explained that he was planning to settle into New York early to learn the job, arriving for the GA elections in May and staying on thereafter. He noted he was interested in visiting Washington in June and asked for USUN's support in setting up key meetings. Ambassador Miller agreed.

¶3. (C) Kerim noted he had just met with SYG Ban Ki-Moon and several other leaders in the UN system. He observed that there were some changes in the UN from his tenure as Macedonia's Permanent Representative in New York (2001-2003), but felt he had a good command of the UN system's core functions. Kerim referred to a "deficit of democracy" in some of the electoral procedures at the UN. Ambassador Miller agreed, noting that perhaps too much decision-making power had been accumulated by the regional groupings. Kerim said he was personally satisfied that his country, Macedonia, is now a contributor to global security with troops deployed abroad, and not just a consumer of support and assistance from others.

Plans on Climate Change

¶4. (C) Kerim explained that one of the key themes he wanted

to focus on was climate change. Recounting some of the earlier discussion on this (reftel), Ambassador Miller explained such a topic could become polarizing in the GA if the growth needs of the developing world are ignored. Growth must be part of the equation. Kerim claimed to understand this, noting that he wanted some of the discussion to focus on innovation. Ambassador Miller argued that, to be useful, any discussion on sustainable development or climate change needed to rise to complex levels. Kerim agreed, positing that the "environment vs. development" dichotomy generally encountered in debates on these topics was too superficial.

15. (C) Ambassador Miller asked how Kerim envisioned such a discussion in the GA context, and Kerim thought it could be handled in a single day's debate (Comment: probably labeled as a "Thematic Debate") without a fixed agenda, focusing on developments up to the present. He then postulated some kind of "panel" should meet after the December Bali COP meeting of the UNFCCC. Ambassador Miller thought it was important to avoid terms like "Summit" or the like. Kerim and Ambassador Miller then discussed how this use of terminology might play into the French desire to create a new expanded UN environmental entity, but Ambassador Miller downplayed the likelihood of that idea getting much support. It was important, in all of these discussions, to use experts instead of media personalities, he explained.

16. (C) Kerim said he was notionally thinking of using experts from the international financial institutions and academics linked to the most current reports and thinking on this topic, mentioning the Stern report. Ambassador Miller argued against highlighting Stern, who was using a hypothetical worst-case model. In order to avoid building upon the current hysteria relating to climate change, there was a need for any UN meeting to focus on science and economics, with discussions built on sound research. There was always the possibility that outcomes driven by a false sense of urgency

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could create problems later on, Ambassador Miller argued.

17. (C) Kerim noted that innovation, research and development needed a larger role in development policies. Ambassador Miller said that it was also important to boost the capability of developing countries to respond to crises and disasters. Ambassador Miller offered to send some additional USG ideas through to Kerim before he assumed office.

General Assembly Topics

18. (C) Kerim asked where the debate in the 62nd GA might usefully be directed, noting the General Debate in the 62nd GA would go through the end of September 2007. Ambassador Miller thought it was important to work towards attaining the MDGs now, even if all of them are not attained everywhere. It might also be time to begin repairing the worst mistakes of the 2005 World Summit -- if not too early -- such as the Human Rights Council. It was important to break down the high levels of suspicion between the north and the south in the UN. Developing countries don't raise frequently enough the efficient delivery of UN services, and this could be an important area for collaboration.

19. (C) Ambassador Miller said that in recent years, there have been many unsuccessful experiments with different negotiating formats. None work as well as classic line-by-line negotiations on text. It might be smart to acknowledge this conclusion, in order to enhance the GA's work. Even so, we did not always succeed, and Ambassador Miller noted his disappointment with the failure in recent years to reach agreement on a trade resolution, in the Second Committee, despite massive efforts. Kerim explained he had already been consulting with current PGA al-Khalifa, and there was much useful work to be done to support the UN's

role in development. He did expect to organize another thematic debate on the MDGs. Ambassador Miller cautioned on the need to focus clearly on the progress achieved to prevent negativity and excessive debate on the shortfalls.

Comment

¶10. (C) While superficially open to US concerns, and well-versed in economics, it is clear that Kerim intends to launch a significant set of discussions/meetings on climate change issues. We may be able to impress upon him, through his Washington visit in June, that the negative consequences of a mismanaged process could be significant, and that the tone of these discussions needs to be carefully modulated. Kerim's strong UN system knowledge and economics background will also be useful as work proceeds on implementing recommendations from the SYG's High Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence, but it is doubtful from the encounters we have had with him to date that he will make this a primary focus. End Comment.
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